



Shire of Northam  
*Heritage, Commerce and Lifestyle*

## **Shire of Northam**

### **Minutes**

### **Bush Fire Advisory Committee**

**8 December 2020**

UNCONFIRMED

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## 1. DECLARATION OF OPENING

The Presiding Member Cr Terry Little declared the meeting open at 5.37pm.

## 2. ATTENDANCE

### Voting Committee:

Councillor – Shire of Northam	Terry Little
Councillor – Shire of Northam	Carl Della
Chief Bush Fire Control Officer	Chris Marris
Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer	Neil Diamond
Inkpen Bush Fire Brigade	Nic Dewar
Clackline Muresk Bush Fire Brigade	Blair Wilding (at 5.41pm)
Bakers Hill Bush Fire Brigade	Kris Brown
Southern Brook Bush Fire Brigade	Paul Antonio
Irishtown Bushfire Brigade	Terry Hasson
Northam Central Bushfire Brigade	Matthew Carroll(from 6.26pm)
Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade	Garry Shepherdson (on behalf of Sam Moss)
Northam Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service	Greg Montgomery

### Non-Voting

Community Emergency Service Manager	Brendon Rutter
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### Staff:

Executive Manager Development Services	Chadd Hunt
HR Assistant/Library Officer	Nadege Vinicombe

### 2.1 APOLOGIES

Executive Assistant - CEO	Alysha McCall
Grass Valley Bush Fire Brigade	Sam Moss
Wundowie Bush Fire Brigade	Mathew Macqueen
Northam Central Bush Fire Brigade	Murray McGregor
Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer	Simon Peters
Irishtown Bush Fire Brigade	Rob Herzer
Jennapullin Bush Fire Brigade	Aaron Smith
Wundowie Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service	Jeffrey Roberts

Department of Parks and Wildlife (Wheatbelt) Graeme Keals  
Department of Parks and Wildlife (Perth Hills) Michael Pasotti

## 2.2 ABSENT

Nil.

## 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members should fill in Disclosure of Interest forms for items in which they have a financial, proximity or impartiality interest and forward these to the Presiding Member before the meeting commences.

As defined in section 5.60A of the Local Government Act 1995, a **financial interest** occurs where a Councillor / Committee Member, or a person with whom the Councillor / Committee Member is closely associated, has a direct or indirect financial interest in the matter. That is, the person stands to make a financial gain or loss from the decision, either now or at some time in the future.

As defined in section 5.61 of the Local Government Act 1995, an **indirect financial interest** includes a reference to a financial relationship between that person and another person who requires a Local Government decision in relation to the matter.

As defined in section 5.60B of the Local Government Act 1995, a person has a **proximity interest** in a matter if the matter concerns a proposed change to a planning scheme affecting land that adjoins the person's land; or a proposed change to the zoning or use of land that adjoins the person's land; or a proposed development (as defined in section 5.63(5)) of land that adjoins the person's land.

As defined in 34C of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996, an **impartiality interest** means an interest that could, or could reasonably be perceived to, adversely affect the impartiality of the person having the interest and includes an interest arising from kinship, friendship or membership of an association.

Item Name	Item No.	Name	Type of Interest	Nature of Interest
Two Year Term for Leadership Positions	7.1	Mr Chris Marris	Financial	In his position as the current CBFCO, Mr Marris received an honorarium, and if the motion be passed and Mr Marris be re-elected, then the honorarium

				would assumingly apply for two years.
Two Year Term for Leadership Positions	7.1	Mr Neil Diamond	Financial	Mr Diamond receives remuneration for the position of DCBFCO.

#### 4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

##### 4.1 COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2020

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Minute No: BFAC.236**

**Moved: Nic Dewar**  
**Seconded: Kristafer Brown**

**That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory meeting held on 8 September 2020 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting.**

**CARRIED 10/0**

#### 5. RECEIVING OF PRESENTATIONS

Nil.



## 6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 6.1 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES MANAGER REPORT

<b>Address:</b>	N/A
<b>Owner:</b>	N/A
<b>Applicant:</b>	N/A
<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Brendon Rutter, Community Emergency Services Manger
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chadd Hunt, Executive Manager Development Services
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil.
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

#### BRIEF

For the Committee to receive and note the update provided by the Community Emergency Services Manager.

#### ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Correspondence from DFES (Rural Fire Division).  
Attachment 2: Open Motions Report.

#### A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

N/A.

#### B. CONSIDERATIONS

##### B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan

Theme Area 3: Safety and Security

Outcome 3.1: Shire of Northam residents are able to pursue the fullest life possible without fear of or hindrance from crime and disorder.

##### B.2 Financial / Resource Implications

Nil.

##### B.3 Legislative Compliance

Nil.

#### B.4 Policy Implications

Nil.

#### B.5 Stake Holder Engagement / Consultation

Nil.

#### B.6 Risk Implications

Risk Category	Description	Rating (consequence x likelihood)	Mitigation Action
Financial	N/A	N/A	N/A
Health & Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputation	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Interruption	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A

### C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

Pre-season preparations are continuing as we gear up for what is shaping up to be an interesting season with some unusual weather patterns.

All appliances have had their annual service and all outstanding repairs should now have been completed.

This year has seen the delivery of 2 x brand new 3.4U, for both the Bakers Hill & Northam Central Brigades, each brigade has adapted to the new appliances well, with multiple brigade level training sessions to ensure that all members are familiar with the new appliances as we head into the season.

PPC has been an ongoing issue this year due to supply chain issues. Most seem to have been resolved now with PPC being rolled out as soon as it arrives, most of our members have their PPC with a few outstanding items still to follow. In an effort to stem the bulk order issues each year, staff have created an online ordering form that all members have access to. This will allow ordering throughout the year with staff in contact with equipment officers should any queries arise out of the ordering process or volume.

This system has been rolled out to ensure we are able to better track PPC orders, and the new system for fleet/facility maintenance will ensure the same approach to maintain orders/repairs in a timely fashion, therefore negating any issues that can arise if an email is missed.



Thank you to the members who have used this process and provided feedback on how improvements can be tweaked to deliver better outcomes.

Membership – Clackline & Wundowie BFB's held their respective recruitment days earlier this year that have proven to be successful, with Clackline signing up 5 new members & Wundowie picking up 7 which is a great result for the brigades and the community they support. Most of these have also completed IFF & BFF meaning they are kitted out and ready to support their brigades in this coming season.

Appliance Folders – The red folders have been delivered to all stations, these folders are designed to provide as much information as possible to responding crews, critical SOP's & UXO mapping is in the folder, along with all new comms plans, appliance contact sheets, important numbers etc. These folders are designed to be dynamic and will very much evolve as required. All folders have an additional Operations Pre-Start book as well as pens, whiteboard markers and t-cards.

Brigades are welcome to add relevant documents that are specific to their area/appliances however please refrain from removing any of the standard information, as the idea is for these to be uniform across appliances for the basic essential information.

UXO Incident – There is still ongoing work in this space, Staff and DFES officers have undertaken a site inspection and are in the process of developing an Operational Pre-Plan (OPP) that will act as a guide for the 3 properties of UXO significance within the Shire of Northam. This will align with the SOP and will provide clear instructions on how to suppress fire on these properties. The OPP will be provided to each brigade appliance & authorised officers folder once approved by the region.

RFD – After a meeting in October with Mr Murray Carter – Director Rural Fire Division, staff provide the attached letter detailing how the RFS is structured and how it operates within DFES.

The RFD will not be operational as a standalone division, instead focusing on research and development and being part of driving appropriate change in policy and procedures to ensure a consistent approach to rural fires is applied across WA.

WAERN – To continue to progress the discussions around the VHF-Mid & VHF – High band, Brigade Captains were emailed on October 30<sup>th</sup> regarding a request to establish within their district from current or past brigade members who have a mid band radio, and to then out of this list identify who within the current members should be entitled to radio network access for the purpose

of establishing a 3<sup>rd</sup> party agreement. Staff received a response from 1 brigade identifying 2 members who were happy to enter into a 3<sup>rd</sup> party agreement, however did not provide information on other known radios within their district.

As everyone is aware, there is a deadline of Dec 31<sup>st</sup> to have a better understanding of what radios are out there and how the network can be better managed. To date nothing has changed, and we are still getting issues with faulty radios causing issues on the network therefore continuing to risk the network infrastructure. This has been identified as a major OSH concern.

The VHF Mid band network has been at end of life for 15 years and now that technology is changing, the end of the mid band network is imminent. There are currently studies happening on the replacement for the WAERN network which is also at end of life, with a likely scenario that the network will eventually transition over to an encrypted digital network, piggy backing off WAPOL.

This means we need to start changing how we communicate on the fire ground and utilise the comms plans that are in place, but also get better at using the equipment we have to its full advantage, in our interactions with the private/farmer units, we should be encouraging them to communicate with us on UHF 5. For this to work as intended we may need to run a few informal training sessions at brigade level where the training officer can ensure that all active members are confident in the operation of the radios, to enable better communications.

Training officers are encouraged to get in touch with staff should they require assistance with resourcing etc. to assist with their delivery of brigade training.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Minute No: BFAC.237**

**Moved: Nic Dewar**

**Seconded: Greg Montgomery**

**That Council notes the Community Emergency Services Manager Report as provided.**

**CARRIED 10/0**

## Attachment 1 – Correspondence from DFES (Rural Fire Division)



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Fire & Emergency Services  
Rural Fire Division



Our Ref: D18335; 20/188571

Mr Jason Whiteaker  
Chief Executive Officer  
Shire of Northam  
PO Box 613  
NORTHAM WA 6401

Dear Mr Whiteaker

### RURAL FIRE DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

I write to provide you with information regarding the Rural Fire Division of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), in response to the request made by the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Advisory Committee (Minute No: BFAC.226).

As you will be aware, the Rural Fire Division of DFES was established in April 2018 as part of significant reforms to the bushfire management sector in Western Australia. These reforms addressed recommendations made by the *Special Inquiry into the January 2016 Waroona Fire* (Ferguson Inquiry). This report recommended the State Government create a rural fire function to enhance the capability for rural fire management and bushfire risk management.

The Rural Fire Division was established as a command of DFES, and will remain part of the DFES structure. This was a deliberate and considered decision to better integrate rural fire capability and expertise into the agency's procedures, planning, policy, and operations. It is also proving to be an effective and agile structure, supporting enhanced collaboration and interoperability within the agency, and also between DFES, local government and bushfire volunteers.

I can confirm that the existing structural arrangements for managing bushfires in rural areas will remain unchanged, reflecting State legislation, State Hazard Plans and relevant bushfire management policies. This decision recognises the essential role of local government and bushfire volunteers, who hold extensive local knowledge and expertise. The new arrangements aim to further strengthen these linkages.

Importantly, we are now starting to see the results of this enhanced focus on bushfire management. The Mitigation Activity Fund and Bushfire Risk Management Program are assisting local governments to identify and treat bushfire risk across the State. 82 local governments are now participating in the program, accessing \$20,351,988.65 million in funding to date.

In addition, the first-of-its-kind Bushfire Centre of Excellence is now operational, running training courses and a Traditional Fire Program from its temporary facilities in Pinjarra. The new permanent facility will be completed in December 2020, creating a home for bushfire training, knowledge and engagement in Western Australia.

I trust that this information is useful to the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Advisory Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact my office should you wish to discuss the matter further, or request a representative from the Rural Fire Division to attend an upcoming meeting of the Committee.

Yours sincerely



**MURRAY CARTER**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RURAL FIRE DIVISION**

20 October 2020

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**Attachment 1 – Open Motions Report**

Date	Motion No	Item No	Subject	Motion	Action By	Comment
17-Jul-19	C.3713	11.3	BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2019	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the Chief Bushfire Control Officer Report as provided.</li> <li>Note the Community Emergency Services Manager Report as provided.</li> <li>Endorse the Resource to Risk document and approve the delivery of the following action items to deliver on the proposed outcomes:</li> <li>Endorse the reallocation of current appliances across brigades as follows and identified in Section 5 of this document, commencing in the 2019/2020 bush fire season:</li> </ol> <p>Brigade                      Inkpen BFB                      LT - Formerly Irishtown LT/2                      2.4R                      Wundowie BFB                      LT Formerly Irishtown LT/1                      Bakers Hill BFB                      LT                      2.4U                      Clackline BFB                      LT                      2.4R                      Northam Central BFB New Brigade                      2.4R Formerly Irishtown 2.4R Irishtown BFB                      1.4B Formerly Inkpen 1.4B                      Southern Brook BFB                      1.4B                      Grass Valley BFB                      1.4B Formerly Clackline 1.4B 4.4B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endorse the creation of the Northam Central BFB to be housed in a location as approved by the Chief Executive Officer.</li> </ol>	CESM	<p>Update 28/04/2020                      6.delayed - covid-19</p> <p>Update 04/03/2020                      6. Ongoing                      12. complete</p> <p>Update 06/09/2019                      1. No action required.                      2. No action required.                      3. No action required.                      4. Reallocation underway with training being offered for the re-allocated appliances.                      Update 05/02/2020 - Complete                      5. Complete                      6. Ongoing - launching Feb 2020                      8. Complete.                      9. Complete.                      10. Complete. To be undertaken periodically as required.</p>

			<p>6. Endorse the creation of an Emergency Services Cadet Unit.                  7. Appoints the following Fire Control Officers for the 2019/20 Season in accordance with the criteria set in section 5 of the Shire of Northam Bush Fire Manual:</p> <p>Inkpen                  - Nic Dewar.                  - Sim Kuiper - (Weather Officer Only)</p> <p>Wundowie BFB                  - TBA – Brigade AGM 20/07/2019</p> <p>Bakers Hill                  - Simon Peters.                  * Nominations excluding Simon Peters are to be referred back to the brigade and BFAC for further consideration.</p> <p>Clackline / Muresk                  - Mathew MacQueen.                  - Matthew Letch</p> <p>Irishtown                  - Robert Herzer.                  - Murray McGregor - (Further training required before formal designation of BFCO)</p> <p>Jennapullin                  - Aaron Smith – (Weather Officer Only)</p> <p>Grass Valley                  - Christopher Marris                  - Paul Reynolds - (Further training required before formal designation of BFCO)                  - Philip Lloyd – Weather Officer + (Further training required before formal designation of BFCO)</p>	<p>11. Complete. To be undertaken periodically as required.                  12. Discussion to be held at September BFAC in relation to the positions.                  13. No action required. Meetings to be scheduled as determined.</p> <p>Update 03/09/2020                  5. Draft process being trialled, positive feedback thus far, will formalise for next BFAC.</p> <p>6. Complete - Established DFES - Youth in Emergency Services Cadet unit</p>
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			<p>Southern Brook                  Paul Antonio – (Further training required before formal designation of BFCO)</p> <p>Wundowie VFRS                  - Jeffery Roberts (Further training required before active status)</p> <p>Northam VFRS                  - Greg Montgomery</p> <p>Shire of Northam                  - Brendon Rutter.                  - Kellee Walters (Administrative Only)                  - Chris Turkich (Administrative Only)</p> <p>8. Allocate honorarium payments to the positions of the Volunteer Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO) &amp; Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (DCBFCO's) of up to \$10,000 and \$1,500 respectively.                  9. Incorporate the honorarium within the draft budget for a fixed total of \$13,000.                  10. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to pay the honorarium in equal monthly instalments in arrears to the relevant officer.                  11. Review the honorarium payments annually to ensure the amount is reflective of the workload on these critical positions.                  12. Formally appoint the following qualified Bush Fire Control Officers to the position of Chief and Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.                  - Chief Bush Fire Control Officer – Mathew Macqueen                  - Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer – Simon Peters                  13. Schedule Bush Fire Advisory Committee meetings on the second Tuesday of March, June, September and November each year.</p>		
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Mr Blair Wilding entered the meeting at 5.41pm.

## 6.2 CHIEF BUSH FIRE CONTROL OFFICER (CBFCO) REPORT

<b>Address:</b>	N/A
<b>Owner:</b>	N/A
<b>Applicant:</b>	N/A
<b>File Reference:</b>	5.1.3.1
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Chadd Hunt, Executive Manager Development Services
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chadd Hunt, Executive Manager Development Services
<b>Officer Declaration of Interest:</b>	Nil.
<b>Voting Requirement:</b>	Simple Majority
<b>Press release to be issued:</b>	No

### BRIEF

For the Committee to receive and note the update provided by the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer.

### ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

### A. BACKGROUND / DETAILS

N/A.

### B. CONSIDERATIONS

#### B.1 Strategic Community / Corporate Business Plan

Theme Area 3: Safety and Security

Outcome 3.1: Shire of Northam residents are able to pursue the fullest life possible without fear of or hindrance from crime and disorder.

#### B.2 Financial / Resource Implications

Nil.

#### B.3 Legislative Compliance

Nil.



#### B.4 Policy Implications

Nil.

#### B.5 Stake Holder Engagement / Consultation

Nil.

#### B.6 Risk Implications

Risk Category	Description	Rating (consequence x likelihood)	Mitigation Action
Financial	N/A	N/A	N/A
Health & Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputation	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Interruption	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A

### C. OFFICER'S COMMENT

It is said that no two seasons are the same and this season seems to be starting in that vein. We have been fortunate to have more mild weather conditions to ease us into the season, with rain and numerous cool days being the order for November. This resulted in the restricted burning period going unchanged for the first time in a few years, and to the credit of the community, it appeared to be well respected.

November saw two harvest vehicle movement bans (HVMB) implemented. One was as expected, the other on November 29 rightly caught people by surprise as the day was relatively cool and overcast. Nevertheless, the significant winds in the east of the Shire averaging over 30km/hr and gusting to over 50km/hr highlights how the wind is one of the most significant contributors to fire danger index (FDI) calculation which can drive HVMBs. The resulting FDI on the day was 38.

In late October the four Weather Officers and leadership team caught up for their pre-season meeting and to welcome new Weather Officer from Inkpen BFB Kyle Frost. We were pleased to be able to issue the Weather Officers with new Kestrels for use in their role as previously foreshadowed. I think this is a positive step forward on two fronts. Firstly, I am a big believer that volunteers should not have to reach into their own pockets to buy equipment essential for their volunteering roles. Secondly, it helps ensure that all Weather Officers are using new, calibrated equipment ensuring accurate readings. I thank the Weather Officers for the important ongoing work they do.

Jumping back to October, I was fortunate to attend the WA Fire and Emergency Services Conference in Perth and witness our very own Murray McGregor win the Murray Lang Bush Fire Service of WA award for his enormous effort and passion in establishing the Northam Central BFB Brigade. Well done Murray.



In early November a Bus Tour was held for the Clackline-Muresk and Grass Valley fire districts, following a tour of the west of the Shire in 2019. 16 members joined in the tour as we travelled two of the largest districts within the Shire to

understand their unique challenges and threats. A big thank you for Murray and Bob for their assistance in organising the day, and to the Shire for the use of the community bus and lunch.

By mid-November, our second annual scenario evening was held at the Northam Recreation Centre. This is an evening to run through three possible scenarios at different areas of the Shire based on real past weather conditions, enabling us to consider the risks and options to tackle such incidents, while networking with members from other Brigades. 23 members attended with a good mix of experienced and new members (and potentially future leaders). Again the feedback from the night was very positive with an overall rating of 9.7/10. There also appears to be strong interest to see this type of event held at a Brigade level so I encourage Brigades to reach out to organise.

At the time of writing, two BFCO meetings and one Captain's meeting has been held since the last BFAC, with a second Captain's meeting to occur before this BFAC. I think there is some benefit to seeing a joint Captain's and BFCO meetings to become a regular on the calendar (replacing, not adding to, the total number of meetings) to help further drive communication across the leadership team.

One Bush Fire Manual Workshop was also held and was a productive evening but needs to be followed up soon with a second workshop to finalise the review and ensure that these suggested changes get actioned this time. It is important that we keep this Bush Fire Manual as a working document that aids the running of our Brigades and service.

On the incident front, there has been a steady flow of jobs since mid-September, but thankfully all have been able to be resolved relatively quickly despite a couple having significant potential. The recent incident on Chitty Road was only a matter of hundreds of meters from where one of the scenarios

from this year's scenario evening was run. Thankfully we had more favourable weather conditions. Unfortunately, we have already seen arson feature this season and so I ask all members and the community to be vigilant for suspicious behaviour.

I was disappointed to see that we were not able to organise a late-season BFCO training course (although one was held earlier in the season) due to a lack of available trainers but hopefully we will be able to organise a number next year to ensure current and potential BFCO's have every opportunity to get this training. Pleasingly Brendon has been able to organise several introductory training courses to support the influx of new members some Brigades have experienced in recent times. Well done on Brigades in attracting these members and please reach out if the leadership team can do anything to support their development and retention in your Brigades.

Finally, there is a motion on the agenda around the duration of appointments of BFCO's and the leadership team. Irrespective of this motion coming forward, following my endorsement as CBFCO at the last BFAC and appointment as the subsequent Shire Council meeting, I thought it was appropriate to start talking about my exit from the CBFCO role. Smooth succession planning for this role has been an elusive ambition for many years, as highlighted in mid-2019. There are multiple reasons for this, but I hope that by starting this conversation early and everyone knowing a possible timeframe upfront, we can collectively work towards a solution. Obviously, my ongoing appointment is subject to your and Council's ongoing support – something I understand is not a given and needs to be worked for. Notwithstanding that, I have a willingness at this stage, if I continue to have your support, to continue in this role for no more than two additional seasons after my current appointment. This would have seen me in the role for just under four years in total. This means that a new CBFCO will need to be found by no later than 2.5 years' time. While that is some time away, given the training requirements and the minimum three years' experience as a BFCO required for the CBFCO position, for some it may already be a tight timeframe. Of course, we can make a change sooner than this if desired. So I think it is now that we collectively need to be having that discussion to identify future leaders (remembering if a current DCBFCO steps up to the CBFCO role, then we would need a new DCBFCO so new people will be needed either way).

Finally, on behalf of the whole leadership team, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members and staff for their service and dedication in 2020 – a year that will go down in history as a memorable one if nothing else. We wish you all a quite (in terms of incidents) and safe Christmas and look forward to working with you in 2021. Merry Christmas.

Regards

Chris Marris

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Minute No: BFAC.238**

**Moved: Kristofer Brown**

**Seconded: Carl Della**

**That Council notes the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer Report as provided.**

**CARRIED 11/0**

Discussion was held around harvest bans and community reactivity. The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer advised that no negative feedback had been received from the brigades, but there has been some discussion regarding harvest ban trigger points.

Discussion was held around notice periods for harvest bans and harvest ban trigger points. The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer advised that notice periods were difficult to anticipate due to unstable weather conditions.

Discussion was held around the notice for lifting of fire bans, particularly relating to farmers in the area, and the harvest ban restrictions on Sunday. The Chief Bush Fire Control Officer advised that the ban on Sunday was resource-based, as brigade resources were already attending to other incidents in the area and should a fire have occurred there would not have been adequate resources to attend.

Discussion was held around the notification systems in place. The Community Emergency Services Manager advised that notifications are sent via SMS to approximately 1500 people, including all brigade members, and are also published via the Shire's social media channels. The Community Emergency Services Manager advised that this number is gradually increasing but tends to hover around 1500 people.

### **6.3 BUSH FIRE MANUAL**

A workshop was held on Nov 18 with representation from most brigades, specifically looking at a comprehensive review of Section 4 – Brigade Administration. Many recommendations have been made, with a further workshop required in the New Year to workshop section 5 before a modified version is presented to BFAC for comment in March 2021.

Thank you to the members who assisted with this process as we further develop this manual to ensure it is a relevant and useful tool for the brigades.

## 7. MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

*Mr Chris Marris declared a financial interest in 7.1 – TWO YEAR TERM FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS as in his position as the current CBFCO, Mr Marris receives an honorarium, and if the motion be passed and Mr Marris be re-elected, then the honorarium would assumingly apply for two years.*

*Mr Neil Diamond declared a financial interest in 7.1 – TWO YEAR TERM FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS as Mr Diamond receives remuneration for the position of DCBFCO.*

### 7.1 TWO YEAR TERM FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

#### BACKGROUND

Grass Valley BFB supports the appointment of leadership positions including CBFCO, DCBFCO and BFCO's for a period of two years at a time. CBFCO and DCBFCO positions to have an ideal maximum term of 2x two-year appointment in each position.

The idea behind this motion is to ensure we have a bit more stability in our FCO network and will hopefully reduce the stress involved in deciding on FCO's on a constant basis.

#### OFFICERS COMMENT

S38A of the Bush Fires Act provides for council to appoint Bush Fire Control Officers "from time to time", there is no legislative guidance preventing this motion from being endorsed by Council.

Staff support the motion in principle, however further investigation needs to be completed to ensure that there is no unintended consequences, and other requirements are able to be met, such as the requirement to achieve and maintain currency in training requirements prior to Oct 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

Staff propose this is included as part of the discussions at the next Bush Fires Manual workshop, when Section 5 is reviewed to ensure that should this change be recommended, the transition can be streamlined in the subsequent sections of the manual for formal endorsement of Council.

**MOTION**

**Moved: Sam Moss**

**That Council appoint the leadership positions of Bush Fire Control Officers, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer for a two year term.**

**MOTION/COMMITTEE DECISION**

**Minute No: BFAC.239**

**Moved: Blair Wilding  
Seconded: Nic Dewar**

**That the matter of extending the leadership positions of Bush Fire Control Officers, Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer to a two year term is included as part of the discussions at the next Bush Fires Manual workshop, is brought to the brigades for comment, and is then presented to the next Bush Fire Advisory Committee meeting.**

**CARRIED 11/0**

**REASON FOR ALTERNATE MOTION:**

The Committee advised that as the issues could have significant consequences on the brigades and those in leadership positions, further time and resources are to be dedicated to discussions before a decision is reached by the Committee.

Discussion was held around the motion. The brigade member for Grass Valley discussed the reasons for the original motion.

Discussion was held around whether a probationary period should also be included, and whether the term should be increased to three years rather than two, or a two year/optional two year agreement be adopted.

**8. URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY DECISION**

Nil.

**9. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **9.1 Communication of Fire Location**

Discussion was held around the communication via SMS of fire locations, and how locations were often incorrect. The Community Emergency Services Manager advised that the Shire could ask that notifications be re-sent via SMS if the location of a fire was initially incorrect and required amending.

### **9.2 T-Cards Completed Incorrectly**

Discussion was held around the incorrect/impartial completion by brigade members of T-Cards. The Committee agreed that all brigade members should be encouraged and advised to complete T-Cards correctly in the future.

### **9.3 New Large Hose Reel Winding Issues**

Discussion was held around the new large hose reel, as when winding there tends to be a limited gap between the reel and the wall behind the reel, causing 10m of the reel to remain jutting out from the wall, and potentially causing a safety risk. Cr Little advised that the hose reels must also be charged when they are being wound.

### **9.4 River Firebreaks**

Discussion was held around fires along the river, and as the equipment currently available to brigades is not suitable for fighting fires along the river, strategic firebreaks along the river banks could be a potential solution.

Mr Matthew Carroll entered the meeting at 6.27pm.

The Executive Manager Development Services advised that there may be potential for firebreaks to be considered around the bridges, as those areas are higher risk – appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders would be required.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 16 March 2021.



## 11. DECLARATION OF CLOSURE

The Presiding Member Cr Terry Little declared the meeting closed at 6.29pm.

"I certify that the Minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee, held on Tuesday 8 December 2020 have been confirmed as a true and correct record."

\_\_\_\_\_ Presiding Member

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

UNCONFIRMED

